

# THE REFORMER.

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Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth. . . . Jeremiah, v. 1.

## CANDID REMARKS.

*"Truths if you'd tell, to save a sinking land,  
"All fear—none aid you—and few understand."*

It is not agreeable to us to wound the feelings of any; but we cannot forbear here to state, in addition to what has already appeared in this work, that the high salaries of ministers, in the present day, are in opposition to the whole genius of the New Testament. Even under the Old Testament dispensation, we have no account of any of the Lord's prophets receiving any compensation whatever for discharging their duty to the people: it was the false prophets only who *prophesied for pay, and divined for money*. And who does not know that the Apostles received no stipulated salaries for preaching the Gospel of Christ?

How would the Apostles, indeed, be lessened in our esteem, if on coming to Ephesus, Antioch, or Corinth, they had agreed to remain there, preaching the gospel to the people, provided they would give them one thousand or fifteen hundred dollars a year; or eight or ten dollars for each discourse! Now, would there have been any more impropriety in their preaching for hire, than for those who profess to be called to preach the gospel in this day? What would have been improper and unbecoming in the Apostles, can never be right in the ministers of Christ in any period of the world. But custom changes the appearance of almost every thing; and by its influence, the understanding becomes so perverted, that what is altogether wrong and unbecoming, is considered as right and proper.

Hence it is, that men "call evil good, and good evil; put darkness for light, and light for darkness; put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!"

But if taking money of people for preaching, was all the harm, it might more easily be overlooked: but the evil stops not here. Those who receive large sums of money from the people, generally seek to please them. Hence they *daub with untempered mortar; prophesy smooth things, and say, peace, peace, when there is no peace*: and for this good service, the people have them in great esteem, listen to all they say, and justify them in all they do; and thus they take away the key of knowledge; not embracing the truth themselves and hindering others. It may, indeed be said with truth, that false teachers have always been the greatest injury to mankind of any people that have existed. They, in fact, pervert and spoil people, so that nothing can be done with them: witness the Jews in Christ's time; and the Catholics in Old Spain at the present day. We very well know what to expect by a public exhibition of such sentiments; and nothing but a belief that it is our duty, and a conviction that things will be no better so long as the present order of ministers continue, (and continue they will as long as they are so well supported) could induce us to express them.

When the gospel was first turned into a species of merchandize, iniquity poured in upon the church like a flood; and from that time to the present, the christian world has groaned under a multitude of false ministers, who have taught for doctrines the commandments of men, and inculcated a degenerate and worldly religion.

There was a time, when the annual salary of the ministers of the Episcopal church in Virginia was fixed by the king, at 16,000 pounds of tobacco. A parsonage house and glebe, were also prepared to their hand. While things remained in this condition, and such liberal provision was made for the support of the priesthood, there was a good supply of ministers in the land; but religion existed among the people, only in

name; although nearly the whole population were accounted religious. The ministers, from the impulse of interest, and to preserve their good livings, watched with jealous care against the introduction of any other religion but their own; and whoever presumed to instruct or teach the people, and had not crossed the Atlantic, to be qualified for the ministry by the laying on of the hands of an English Bishop, was liable to whipping and imprisonment. And a number of Baptist preachers (for they were the first who ventured to preach in those parts,) were both whipped and dragged to prison.

The present pastor of the Baptist church at Richmond, was sentenced to receive 39 lashes for preaching the gospel; and another Baptist preacher, at the same time, whose name was Greenwood, and who died but a few years since, actually had the sentence executed on him. But the pastor of the church at Richmond was so fortunate as to escape the ignominious punishment, through the remonstrance of a person of some note among the ruling party.

But how soon was the state of things changed, when the Americans assumed the government, and took away the glebe and the 16,000 pounds of tobacco! They ceased any longer to officiate, almost to a man; and either lived upon their income, already secured—entered upon some other employment, or removed to other parts, where people were more favourable to their views. This made room for better men, whose labours were calculated to moralize and reform the inhabitants; who had sunk into the greatest degeneracy under their former ministers.\*

It is certain, that large salaries are calculated to cherish and bring forth a multitude of false ministers;

\* Says a late writer, "What is the first or principal cause or causes which induce most men to take upon them the office of teachers in the christian Church? Though they may wish to do some good in their day, yet have they not a particular view to the emolument arising from the office, or to the honour, esteem, or applause of men? Where the motive whereby men are actuated in preaching the gospel is temporal wealth, or worldly honour, no wonder if the church should degenerate, and come to ruin."

and in any country, where these abound, iniquity must prevail; and in time, except a change take place, the cup of transgression will become full; and judgments and calamities will follow in train, to cut off or to afflict the victims of divine displeasure. This seems likely to be fulfilled upon the inhabitants of Spain at the present time. For by late accounts from Spain it appears, that a very serious insurrection has taken place in that country, which threatens to overturn the existing order of things. England, moreover, overrun by hosts of deists, in consequence of a corrupt and degenerate priesthood, cannot be considered as in a very safe condition. Should the barriers which at present restrain the common people, once be broken down, there can be no doubt but much the same scenes would be acted in that empire, which were some years since acted in France. Like causes may be expected to produce like effects.

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*For The Reformer.*

TO THE EDITORS:

The following is inserted in the second number of "*The Reformer*," and last page; taken, as appears, from the "*Baltimore Chronicle*:"—

"We see by the New Orleans papers, received by yesterday's mail, that the Theatre and Opera-House are still kept open on Sabbath evenings."

Upon which the editor of the *Chronicle* observes:—

"It is hoped that a prevailing sense of decency, if no higher consideration, will induce the authorities of that city to put a stop to such licentious indulgences. Nothing marks the general depravity and corruption of manners more than such open and unblushing profanation of the Sabbath."

The editor remarks on the theatre and opera house being kept open, on what is called Sabbath evenings as a very great iniquity: but very little notice is ever taken of the iniquitous proceedings of mercenary and hireling ministers, except it be to applaud

them. But when we take an impartial view of the theatrical performer, who stoops to the low and servile state of a buffoon, to amuse the vain and idle multitude, by mimicking the warrior, hero, &c. is he not much more innocent than the theatrical hireling priest, who, without having any more of the spirit of Christ, or any better intention, undertakes to amuse and entertain his auditors, by the display of his talents and oratory, in descanting on subjects of a sacred and divine nature? For the first simply makes sport, without deceiving the people; while he only counterfeits and mimicks the actions and doings of other wicked men, like himself. But the chief business of hireling priests, is to counterfeit and mimick the acts and doings of righteous men, and steal their words and sayings out of the Scriptures, and make merchandize of them; and the more fully to answer their lucrative purposes, they metamorphose them, so as to make them say what they do not, nor what their authors ever intended they should say; by which means they deceive the weak and credulous.

As a proof of the tragical performances which are acted under the sanction of such ministers, and in the name of religion, mark the parade as noted in the first number of *The Reformer*, at the time of laying the corner stone of the 1st Presbyterian meeting house in New Orleans. What an abomination! See the procession!! The 1st grade, "*Members of Masonic Lodges clothed and decorated;*" next "*Trustees of the Presbyterian church; the Clergy; the Governor and Officers of his staff; Secretary of State; Major-General Ripley and Commodore Patterson, with the Officers of their respective commands; Music; Senate and House of Representatives of Louisiana; Judges of the Parish, District, Criminal, Supreme and Federal Courts; resident Consuls; Citizens and Strangers; Grand Masters and Officers of the Grand Lodge of Louisiana; under the escort of three companies of Light Dragoons, the Louisiana Guards and Washington Foot Artillery.*"

What a curious groupe! Surely Satan never was

more honoured, since he first took the command of poor, fallen, blinded man. I have often heard it observed, that New-Orleans was one of the wickedest places in the United States, and I think the laying of the foundation stone of this meeting house, agreeably to their own account, caps the whole, and is the most glaring insult to heaven, and the fullest denial of Christ and the christian religion, that I ever met with in the annals of history. Hence, to reflect on the acts and performances of the theatre and opera (as bad as they are) and pass over the tragedies acted on the stage of hirelings, whereby they have wheedled the credulous inhabitants of New-Orleans out of thirty or forty thousand dollars, to purchase a lot, and build a stately edifice for a hireling, to expose to sale his merchandize of words and sentences, partly drawn or kidnapped from the Bible, and interspersed with pretty little scraps of human and heathenish science, is "to strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel."

And the hireling, it seems, not content with the vast sum already obtained through their credulity or imbecility, to erect for himself a splendid meeting house, is taking from them the further sum of four thousand dollars a year, for what he presumptuously calls preaching the gospel. Is it not astonishing to think of the brazen front of such men! poor mushrooms of the earth, who know nothing of the gospel but what they have obtained through study and human learning!—These men, although they profess to believe the Scriptures, with tongue and lip, yet they deny them by their acts and doings; as may be seen by the before mentioned parade.

Christ, *only*, can qualify men for his work and service: all other qualifications are of no avail. Thus, when he sent forth his disciples to "heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead," and "cast out devils;" he qualified them for the work he sent them to do: and as they freely received this qualification, without money or price, he commanded them to do these benevolent works also freely: they were to make no

charge or contract of any kind, for the services they performed.\* And when he afterwards sent them the Comforter, or Holy Ghost, thereby qualifying them (without book or study) by and through its holy influence operating in them, to baptise their hearers with the spirit, (the only true and Christian baptism;) he gave no direction to them to make any charge for doing this holy and blessed work, whereby sinners were turned into saints, and had power bestowed on them to become the sons of God.

Now we do not find that any man, or society of men, have ever pretended to qualify or empower persons to do those things mentioned before; such as healing the sick, raising the dead, &c. and yet every sensible christian, if he reflects, must believe that it is full as easy to empower or qualify men for these services, as to preach the gospel with the power sent down from heaven, whereby relief and cure is administered to immortal souls.

The sons of Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the Priests, undertook to do something of the work of the Apostles without the true qualification. Therefore, it is said, they "took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits, the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We

\* *Note by the Editors.*—Simon Magus, no doubt, had an eye to gain, or some honour to be obtained for his works and services, when he offered the Apostles money, in order to have power given him, that on whomsoever he laid his hands, they might receive the Holy Ghost. But the Apostles plainly discerned the spirit by which he was actuated, and indignantly rebuked his mercenary and ambitious views, saying, "thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money." And they told him, notwithstanding his profession of religion, that he had neither part nor lot in the matter: for his heart was not right in the sight of God; and exhorted him to repent of his wickedness.

What would become of our theological students, and hireling clergymen, if the Apostles were again to appear on the earth! Their appearance would truly be a day of gloominess and darkness to them, as much as they profess to reverence them—just like the Jews in our Saviour's time, who seemed to have a great regard to the prophets, whom their fathers killed; when they were the very children of their fathers, in spirit as well as in the flesh; and put to death Him, that was greater than the prophets, for telling them the truth.

adjure you by Jesus, whom Paul preacheth." But what was the result? Why, what every man of common sense would be sure of, when pretenders and intruders attempt what they have no ability nor qualification to effect.—"The evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye? And the man in whom the evil spirit was, leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded." Hence, we see there were counterfeit priests or ministers in former days: and to be sure, like our modern hirelings, to carry on the cheat, they made use of the literal name of Jesus; but they were void of its power.

There are many as unqualified to do the Lord's work, now in the ministry, as those sons of Sceva.—And as they no longer possess arbitrary force, to compel men to submit to their measures, as heretofore, they must transform themselves, like the sly subtle serpent, that creeps in the grass, where he can hide; for this was his doom, "on thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat."

But, to return to the parade at New-Orleans, when all classes seemed to be united, from the highest to the lowest, professor and profane, the blood-thirsty warrior, the cruel oppressor, governor and officers of his staff, general and commodore with their officers, senate and house of assembly, judges of different departments, resident consuls, citizens and strangers, *grand masters of masons*, all under the escort of three companies of light dragoons, the Louisiana guards and Washington foot artillery: and to bring up the rear, (although it seems too bad to join any thing to the preceding that bears the sacred name of religion; but so it is by their own account,) trustees of the presbyterian church, the clergy—and finally, may it not safely be said, deists and atheists, all associated together, as with one accord, and actuated by one spirit. What to do? Why, strange and astonishing to tell, to lay one, and only one, of the stones intended as a foundation of a presbyterian meeting-house!!

Surely, Satan never could have been better pleased, than at this singular parade. And the unity and fellowship, mentioned at the close, proves that the assembly were actuated and led by one spirit: and after taking a correct view of the whole affair, together with all its bearings, I think it no difficult task to decide, what spirit it was that governed the whole.

A FARMER.

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*For The Reformer.*

MESSRS. EDITORS—

I have carefully read the first numbers of *The Reformer*; and as one, I trust, who would wish to judge impartially of what is contained therein, I must confess that the evidence which is brought to prove many of the degenerate practices now in Christendom, is so strong, that if men have any honesty at all, they must acknowledge that these things are so. But, it is a sorrowful consideration, that few people will exercise the privilege of judging for themselves, in matters which deeply concern them; but will suffer themselves to be led and governed by others, who profess, while they know not the truth.

Prejudice and party spirit have long ruled in the hearts of men, and those who have had the most zeal for the cause of a priest, the promotion of their sect, or the traditions of men, have been considered the most pious and best of christians. And, for my part, I have but little hope, that many of the present generation will be made better, by any thing that can be said, or done, for their reformation and amendment. For as blindness, for the most part, happened to Israel in Paul's time, so, also, many in this day, appear to be in a state of great spiritual blindness, and, like the poor deluded Jews, depending solely on the teaching of their doctors and learned men, they are ready to exclaim, "*Have any of the Rulers or of the Pharisees believed,*" or any of our divines or strict professors.

But the wise man has said, "A reproof entereth more into a wise man, than an hundred stripes into a fool:" so, although the clearest evidence should be brought, to prove the present degeneracy of christendom, there are but few who have understanding, honesty or candour enough to acknowledge its truth. How inattentive, indeed, are most of the professors of religion, to inquire and search for themselves respecting what is right! How seldom do they ever take a single glance at the conduct and preface of the clergy, in order to ascertain, whether they are living according to the example set them by Christ and the Apostles.

Now our Lord has told us, that the tree is to be known by its fruit. And here let us contrast the easy, rich and splendid appearance of our modern preachers, with the indigence and humility of Christ and his Apostles, who scarcely had where to lay their heads. Do we discover any thing of that worldly and pompous appearance in them, which is manifested in the ministers of this day? It may be boldly asserted, no: their lives were pure, humble and self-denying; and they were influenced by the love of the truth, and the good of souls, in all they spoke. It was not the sake of gain, or a desire of applause, which led them to preach the word. But to me, it is a sufficient proof, that the greater part of the preachers in our time, love money more than the souls of men, because they will not preach without it. Such preachers as these, might be readily spared; as the world, in my opinion, would be as well without them; for it is better to have no guide, than to have an artful, wicked, designing one, who will lead you astray, to rob you. And if a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven, what will be the fate of those wealthy doctors, who have raised themselves to independence, by taking from the poor and ingratiating themselves into the favour of the rich; "having men's persons in admiration because of advantage?"

Oh! that there was a heart in man, to understand the truth, and to discover the deep, subtle workings of Satan, in synods and assemblies of divines, who dictate for the christian world, and lord it over God's heritage; for self-interest, I fear, is the great main-spring which moves and actuates them in all their proceedings.

The Theological Seminaries, now going forward in this country, seem well adapted to the present corrupt state of the times; and the spirit of anti-Christ is very plainly to be seen in them; for it appears as if it is no longer to be the prerogative of God, to qualify and send by whom he will to preach the gospel, but men have assumed this authority to themselves, and make and send forth preachers of whom they please. In the primitive days of christianity, if labourers were wanted in the Lord's vineyard, only to serve tables, they were first to be qualified by the Holy Ghost, and by honest report, and the congregation of believers had the power to choose them. This was, no doubt, according to the order of God; and whenever people depart from the right way, and are not content to be led and governed by Christ, the true and living head, and those pure and heavenly precepts he has left us on record, but will frame to themselves a code of human laws and regulations, which make void the commandments of God, they cease to be any longer the churches of Christ, and become mere bodies of carnal men. And their teachers being generally but men of this world, and having great influence, are lordly and domineering over them; and those who do not come and put their trust under their shadow, may expect that "fire will come out of the bramble and devour them." But

truly it is just with God to suffer us to be punished for our credulity, and for not obeying him rather than men.

SYNOPSIS.

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*For The Reformer.*

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## THE IMPARTIAL OBSERVER,

NO. III.

Looking over the pages of the "*Religious Remembrancer*," which gives a particular account of the mission to the Sandwich Islands, as well as many other missionary undertakings; I was led to examine, more particularly, the manner in which these undertakings are now conducted, and the good that will be likely to arise from them to the heathen. And when I considered the maxims and practices which now prevail, among those who are the most active in these establishments, and contrasted the pomp and elegance of the missionaries themselves, with the simplicity and humility of the Apostles, and first promulgators of the gospel; and also reflected on the large salaries they receive, the little manifestation of holiness and piety that appears in their lives, the doctrines they inculcate, and the sectarian predilections which they all seem to retain; I was induced to believe it very possible, after the most impartial examination, that they would be of no more real advantage to the people where they go, and whom they may bring to embrace the christian religion, than those in our Saviour's time, who like them, compassed sea and land to make proselytes to Judaism.

This conclusion, accompanied with a certain knowledge of the tens of thousands annually expended in these splendid and popular undertakings, while the poor and needy in our own land, by multitudes, are suffering unpitied, the greatest privations and hardships, affected my spirits, and I sunk into a kind of sorrowful slumber or reverie: when, methought, I saw the missionaries, who sailed from Boston, last October, for the Sandwich Islands\* (and in praise of whom so much has been preached and published in the United States) arrive at their destined port; and after landing and being introduced into the presence of Tumahamaah, the king, he interrogated them relative to the object of their visit. To this the missionaries answered: "We

\* The individuals connected with the mission which sailed to the Sandwich Islands, consisted of nineteen natives of America, viz. seven gentlemen with their wives, and five children. Besides these there were four natives of the Sandwich Islands.

come to preach to you the glorious gospel of Christ, and bring you to embrace the religion of christians." "And what is the gospel?" answered the king. "Glad tidings of great joy to all people," rejoined the missionaries, with one accord. "But what are the fundamental doctrines of the gospel?" asked the king. "They are contained in the sermon, preached by Christ himself upon the mount," the missionaries replied, and repeated the same in substance forthwith. After this dialogue, methought the king delivered the following speech to them extempore :

"*Christian Missionaries*—You have come from a far distant country, and at a great expense, in order to induce me to renounce my own, and embrace your religion. It is therefore reasonable, that I should know its intrinsic value, before I reject or receive it. And, in order to ascertain the truth in this matter, it will be necessary to see which act most agreeably to the laws of nature, and most consistent with the dictates of righteousness; your people or mine. For a religion, which does not influence the manners and morals of any society, is of no benefit, and consequently cannot be right.—I must acknowledge, that if you and your people, act agreeably to the principles which you have just held forth, your society must, of all people, be the most happy, and your conduct the most agreeable to the will of a divine Being: but, on the contrary, if you hold forth what you do not practise, and profess a great degree of virtue, and possess it not, you are among the worst of men, and, of all characters, are the most hateful to God. To speak plain, you are hypocrites.

"Now, from what I can learn respecting your country, and the conduct of your people, I would candidly appeal to your own selves, if your actions, in general, are not diametrically opposite to the principles which are inculcated in the sermon you have just repeated to me. If my information be correct, and I cannot doubt its truth, you must very well know, such is the corruption at present prevalent, in what is termed your civil society, that the unsuspecting and honest-hearted man, is often brought to be very poor, and is considered of but little account; while the knave, the swindler, and the cheat, as frequently become very rich, and are very distinguished, if not principal members in your community. Hence, there is among you, every *encouragement* given to *vice*, and *discouragement* to *virtue*. Were I to give a detail of particular instances of injustice in your public transactions, and of fraud, abuse of confidence and overreaching in your private dealings, my account of them would not be concluded for years to come. I will now briefly point out the manners and conduct of my people, and give you an opportunity to compare them with those of your own country, at your leisure.

"I would first observe, although our population amounts to about 500,000 souls, yet not one beggar is to be seen among

them all: whereas, in the cities and towns where you came from, there are thousands of miserable creatures of the same flesh and blood with yourselves, huddled in shattered hovels, clothed in rags and perishing with hunger and cold. For in your society, while one part of your species are exalted above the state of man, the other are degraded and depressed to the condition of brutes. Here in this country, every man with his family, has his dwelling, and as much land as he can cultivate, and no more. For a man here, to have more houses than he occupies himself, would be counted as absurd, as for one of your wealthy people to have five wheels to his coach. Hence, his house, his canoe with its ornaments, his fishing and hunting apparatus, all of which he makes himself, with the voluntary assistance of his neighbour, is all his property. We have no money, and of course no systematic swindlers and fraudulent speculators, who live on the labours, and trample on the rights of their unsuspecting neighbours; and who substitute injustice for industry, working all with their heads, and none with their hands.

"Some men in your large cities, have from 40 to 50 houses, which they rent out to others of their fellow-citizens, many of whom, perhaps, are far superior to them in mental and moral excellence; yet, should one of them happen, through sickness or misfortune to be unable to pay his rent, all he has in the world is liable to be sold, even to the bed his sick wife lies upon.

"I might here enumerate many other instances of inhumanity and unrighteousness, in what is denominated by you, civil society. But it would be an endless task to particularize the thousands of civilians, and others much like them, who live in elegant idleness on the fruits of *villany, violence and oppression*; and to describe the variety and diversity of crimes, for which we cannot find appellations, and to commit which, we have not at present, the most distant temptation. In this country, are neither prisons or palaces; we have no poor houses or paupers—nor have we either keys or locks; for thieves and highway robbers are not known among us. But the system which prevails in your country, and which you have come to establish among us, not only generates these, to us strange practices; but it must also be calculated to destroy our social comforts (if the same cause always produces the same effects) and lay the foundation for great domestic misery and unhappiness; by creating numerous imaginary wants, which can never be satisfied, and to gratify which, we at this time, have not the smallest wish.\* It

\* The impolitic African, would have suffered his unoffending neighbours to enjoy their freedom, and to die in peace at their own homes, had not his cupidity been awakened by the tinsel and trinkets of christians, less valuable than even grains of Indian corn. The men, therefore, who inspire these superficial wants,

must, also, have a direct tendency to enhance our misery hereafter: for, if you believe in a future state of rewards and punishments, as you profess, you must also believe, that the system which produces the most crimes, is also productive of the most misery hereafter.—Now, the cruelty of war with our enemies, is considered by you, our greatest crime; yet, with all your boasted civilization and charity, you often destroy more lives in one battle, than we do in an age. And what dreadful crimes, and mountains of consequent misery, does the abundance of money in one part of your population, and the want of it in the other produce daily. Our wants are natural, and easily supplied. Our climate is mild and salubrious. Our woodlands abound with cattle, our fields with fruit, our lakes with excellent fish; whereas you create artificial wants, which nature could never dictate; and the more you obtain, the more is a desire enhanced to possess more; and the more cruel, hard-hearted and oppressive you become. You call us savages; but we are far more hospitable to strangers, and show more humanity to each other than you do,† notwithstanding all your great professions of goodness and compassion. Numerous instances of your inhumanity and cruelty to each other, as well as to the Africans, could be given, sufficient to put you, and those who sent you, to the blush, if you could view them in the same point of light that they appear to us.

are the greatest enemies of man. They tempt the simple natives, to obtain the object of their desires, at the expense of every honest and honourable sentiment; and when obtained, what results to them but condemnation; while at the same time, they feel an insatiable desire to possess more. An Indian from the back forests of this country, on coming to one of our large cities, perceived a spacious building. Being informed upon inquiry, that thieves, robbers, &c. were confined in it, he observed, that it was no wonder they had so many of these kind of people among them, when they had such a variety of trinkets and fine things all about to tempt them.

† I cannot forbear, here to mention, two very remarkable instances of inhumanity and want of feeling, which occurred in this country the past year, and which were published in our papers at the time. The first took place, when a vessel got upset, in passing up the North River, from New York to Fishkill. While the passengers were struggling to save themselves, two other vessels from above passed near them, without so much as condescending to lend them the smallest assistance. And when one of those vessels were called on to aid the sufferers, by the benevolent captain Harris of Poughkeepsie, who stopped on his way, and used all his exertions in their behalf, they coolly excused themselves, assigning as a reason that they had *not time*. Five of the passengers, if I mistake not, were drowned. The other case of inhumanity which I shall relate, was exercised towards a traveller, on his way to Fredericktown, (Maryland.) Being sick and penniless, he entreated the people, at a number of houses, to give him shelter and relief; but entreated in vain. At length, exhausted with fatigue, hunger and sickness, he laid him down under the foliage of a tree, near the road, and literally died for want of the necessities of life. He lay where he died 4 days

“Those inhabitants of our islands, who have been made acquainted with the fate of the aborigines of the West India Islands, the climate of which is similar to our own, will tremble when they receive as inmates, men who, for any thing we know, are under no better spirit, than the missionaries and soldiers, who exterminated that unoffending and once happy people; particularly those of Hispaniola. For the natives of that island were wholly extirpated in a few years; as well those who embraced the christian religion, as those who rejected it. Their cruelty to them, was indeed, in the extreme: for, they hunted and shot them, like partridges on the mountains, and pursued them even to the recesses of their own forests, and tore them to pieces by fierce bloodhounds, which were brought from Europe for that express purpose. Their lands were then appropriated for the cultivation of the sugar cane, and the free born sons of Africa, were enslaved and imported to plant it with their hands, and wet the ground on which it grew with their tears, under the lash and scourges of their cruel oppressors. These are some of the consequences, which have resulted to those you call heathen, under the pretence of civilizing them, and we cannot ensure to ourselves a better fate, whatever professions you may make to us; for we often see your ships of war, and the powerful instruments you have invented to destroy and subjugate all who seem to stand in your way, or resist your authority——”

He was proceeding in his speech, to the missionaries, but the agitation produced in my mind, at the rehearsal of the crimes and cruelties committed by those, who have professed to receive the benign principles of the meek and lowly Jesus, awoke me from the slumber into which I had fallen, and I was left to indulge my own reflections. I must confess, what presented itself before me, while I remained in this state of slumber, had no other tendency, but to confirm me in the belief I had already entertained, respecting our missionary undertakings; and I cannot but lament, the dishonour which has been done to the christian name, and the cause of truth, by abusing the gospel of the blessed Saviour, and acting as monsters, while men have professed to be its advocates. It also more clearly enabled me to see the natural effects which follow the entrance of our modern missionaries amongst the heathen. For to pass by many things, which might be mentioned, no sooner do our missionaries enter their borders, than they begin to sow the seeds of that degeneracy, which now so generally prevails throughout christendom; I mean ambition, pride and grandeur. On settling among them, our

without burial; when pity warmed the hearts of four black men, who nailed a few boards together, boxed him up, and dug a grave in a field near by for his interment. While performing this humane deed, to conclude the woeful tale, the owner of the ground made his appearance, and forbade them depositing him on his land.

missionaries must have fine houses and fine furniture, and in dress and appearance they assume an air of dignity and worldly consequence. This, too successfully tempts the natives to imitate them, the order of society among them becomes changed, and the whole train of evils and vices, which have overspread the christian world, soon commence. And what do they receive in exchange for this alteration of their former manners and habits? Instead of being more peaceable, and more disposed for peace, the instruments to make war, which they obtain through an intercourse with their new neighbours, they suppose give them an advantage over their adjacent countrymen; and being never taught the impropriety of fighting, they often engage in scenes of warfare, which in the space of a few years, nearly depopulates the most fertile portions of their country. Nor is it uncommon, for the professors of christianity themselves, to engender these wars, and assist them therein, in order to promote purposes of their own. In this, they too well succeed: for it is not generally very long, before all the natives, after being brought to fight each other for a time, fall a prey to the more wiley and powerful intruders among them; and their liberties, and sometimes their very name, is scarcely known any more. Effects like these, have not been uncommon in our time, and may again take place: for all the missionaries, who have yet gone to the heathen, are I believe, advocates for war; and there is, generally, very soon a military establishment made in any country after the missionaries commence their undertakings: then wars and bloodshed ensue, till the natives fall before the superior art and persevering efforts of (to them) a new race of men.

SOPHRONIA.

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*For The Reformer.*

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*Messrs. Editors.*—As the object of your work appears to be aimed at the various corruptions prevailing in the churches of christendom in the present day, with a view to effect a reform, I cannot withhold my approbation of your undertaking—wishing you success so long as the same moderation and happy talent of discrimination, continue to evidence themselves in your succeeding numbers, as in those already come to hand. I know of no work of the kind in the United States; for although there are various periodical publications on religious subjects, yet they are so completely under the influence of one party or another, as to forbid the insertion of any article not in accordance with their popular orthodoxy; and, of course, in justifica-

tion of usages and practices, now prevalent, which ought to be exposed in order to be laid aside.

I am very sensible, that it requires no small degree of impartiality to be able to see the defects of our own party, as well as those of our own lives; and although I am not of your sentiment, that in order to be able to see the improprieties peculiar to all, we must belong to none; yet, such is the prevalence of corruption in the various sects now professing christianity, that, in my opinion, it is impossible for any sincere person to go the whole length with any of them, and be guiltless.

My object, however, in this communication, is not to declaim against the abuses of other societies, (though volumes might be written on the subject) but to point out a few things, which appear to operate unfavourably, among that denomination of people to which I belong. It has been too common for those of every society, to overlook their own faults; and while they have attempted to point out the mote in another persuasion, they have forgotten that a beam was in their own. If we would effect a reform, we must divest ourselves of that excessive fondness for our own opinions, and our own persuasion, which betrays us into innumerable absurdities and inconsistencies, at variance with the truths of the gospel.

It may be considered extravagant to assert, but I hesitate not to say, that of all the sects, which have arisen since the reformation, none have been so extensively useful, in reforming mankind, especially the middle and lower classes, as the Methodists. At the time they arose, infidelity had nearly overspread England. Morality and righteousness were fast sinking into decay; and when little remained but to set up religion as a subject of ridicule, by way of reprisal, for having so long interrupted the pleasures of the world; the Methodists were the principal instruments in the hand of God of stemming the dreadful torrent.\* The simplicity of their manner; their undaunted courage in attacking vice and error, penetrating into sections of the country, where poverty and ignorance served as barriers against the spread of the gospel, had an impressive effect on the minds of the people—especially when contrasted with the indolence and conduct of those ministers, who loved their own ease, in preference to the pleasure of rescuing souls from the devourer, who were *led by him captive at his will*; and their labours were blessed to the reformation and renovation of thousands of the fallen race. And the surprising increase of converts over this continent, in the space of fifty years, is without a parallel. But like all other societies, we have had our rise, our zenith or flourishing state, and our gradual decline, “making way for the departure of light.”

\* See the article “Methodist” in Buck’s Theological Dictionary.

By this I would not be understood as implying, that additions of new members are less frequent than formerly. But experience has shown, that the increase of numbers, and outward prosperity in any society, are no evidence of the increase of piety and righteousness: on the contrary, it has been observed, "as numbers increase, profession becomes more general, and religion more superficial. The spirit of the world and worldly maxims creep into the church; the contagion is gradually and imperceptibly imbibed, till at length the body is contaminated and hastens to decay."\*

"In every age, some individuals, on perceiving the deluge of vice and profaneness which has flowed around them, have wished to escape from its dire effects, and have formed a plan from the purest motives, to seclude themselves or separate from the multitude. But in time, when others have succeeded and numbers have increased, new plans and regulations of a political nature have been adopted, in order to strengthen their body, and make themselves in some sort independent. They have assumed an external appearance of sanctity, whilst at the same time, the carnal mind or evil propensity of nature has remained unchanged; which has appeared too often to the great scandal of pure and undefiled christianity. A liberal mind will feel disposed to grant that Ignatius Loyala, (the founder of the Jesuits,) and the few who at first joined him, acted from a good motive: but to what political influence their successors arose, by their combined subtlety, and what was the cause of their fall, let Europe testify. Let all sects and sectaries take warning by this. Let them not be self-sufficient; or imagine that because they now vary the mode or do not manage their economy exactly in the same manner as those we have hinted at, they are therefore secure. For, some of the poisonous infection may have been imbibed already, and, though not easily perceived, may be diffusing through the vitals of the body, and will ere long produce a mortification. Whatever is opposite or

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contrary to the mind of Christ, or to the spiritual religion which he has established, this is truly Antichrist, wherever it may appear."

It has been said, that a revival of religion scarcely continues longer than one generation; and that there never was any Institution, however wise and good, but in the lapse of time it has been abused. The same writer remarks; "If it be prudent or necessary, therefore, to inquire into the cause or causes of degeneracy in the affairs of state, it is undoubtedly much more so, with regard to religion, or the various denominations of those who profess it. If, upon a calm and dispassionate observation, some cause or causes, seem to be operating, or likely to operate, for the worse, among any body of religious people, it cannot be deemed unreasonable or uncharitable, to point them out, in order to prevent or in some degree to check their growth."\*

When a revival of religion takes place, (says Baxter,) it usually begins in the ministry. This remark will be warranted, by referring to the history of the reformation, by the instrumentality of Luther and his faithful cotemporaries in the ministry; as also at a later period by the Wesleys, Whitfield, and others; all of whom appeared to have been inspired with evangelical principles, by reading the holy scriptures, meditation and prayer. When corruptions creep into the church, it as generally gains admittance through the same channel, diffusing its baneful influence down through every order, until death has (unless prevented by amputation) sealed their destiny, and the candlestick is removed out of its place.

This observation deserves some consideration, when we call to remembrance the history of the church of Rome. That church, retained her primitive purity, through a scene of suffering and persecution, unparalleled almost in the history of human transactions. But that which could not be effected by prisons, flames and tortures, was soon brought about by a new state of things taking place, when Constantine, emperor of Rome, became christian, and poured honours and wealth on the clergy. Then, ease and luxury, soon engendered pride and arrogance; and the offspring of these a desire of power, which, meeting with gratification, soon enabled them to lord it over the poor heritage of Christ; laying the foundation for a system of error and corruption, at war with the civil and religious liberties of the christian world.

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the same game. It is true, our constitution has put it out of the power of any denomination, to enlist the secular arm with their religious Hierarchies. If this could only be effected, we have materials enough in the United States, (especially in New England,) to make friars, cardinals and popes, of as sterling stuff as ever graced Rome in her best days.

Let all denominations consider that the department which God has assigned his ambassadors, is to be ensamples to their flocks, of meekness, humility, and love; totally renouncing the world, with all its pomps and vanities,—a spirit as opposite to the spirit of the greater part of the ministers in this our day, as humility is to pride, or as righteousness is to vice: and yet all acknowledge the preceding to have been the character of our Lord and his Apostles. Humility, indeed, was the lesson Christ constantly taught his disciples, by example and precept. "The princes of the Gentiles," said the blessed Saviour, "exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your servant; even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

Accordingly, we find our Lord on a certain occasion, when supper was ended, took a towel, and girding himself, after pouring water into a basin, he began to wash his disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. Considering the dignity of the person engaged in this, the lowest and most menial office, that of washing the feet of his disciples, can we wonder at Peter's exclaiming, "Thou shalt never wash my feet?" But hear our Lord explain this astonishing transaction, so contrary to worldly usages and to the views of men, who could not conceive that true greatness consists in true humility. Said the divine Redeemer; "If I, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." As though he should have said 'Do not suppose, that the Kingdom I am about to establish, has any tendency whatsoever to cherish the pride or gratify the ambition of carnal nature, by creating higher and lower orders in the administration of its government: on the contrary, my design by the example I have set before you, both on this occasion and throughout my whole life, is to teach you the necessity of self-abandonment, meekness, and love, that you may be led to imitate me your Lord and Master, in lowliness and meekness, each esteeming the other better than themselves; and in proportion as these heavenly virtues, evidence themselves in your whole deportment, the farther you will be removed from a desire of having the pre-eminence over one another, and thereby promote the best interests of my spiritual kingdom on earth.'

Now, however this view may be thought to accord with the primitive state of christianity, there are, I fear, but few churches in this our day, the discipline\* of which has not a direct tendency, by the power vested in their ministers, of promoting a spirit as opposite to the one here described, as light is to darkness—and none, probably, more than that of the society to which I belong, the discipline precluding the members from any participation in the government of the church whatever: neither have they a representation, either in the annual or general conferences, any more than they have in the parliament of Great Britain.

But this sovereignty of our conferences, or in other words of our preachers, we should have no cause to fear, were we sure always to preserve our primitive character. But let our ministers once become worldly, avaricious, high minded and overbearing, and we shall see what dreadful havock will ensue, by an undue exercise of that power, over which we have no more control, than we have over the elements of the natural world. Doctor Whitehead, says, in his life of Wesley, page 200: "The history of mankind uniformly shows, that when the people have no balance of power in the government of the church or religious society, to be used as a check against undue influence of their teachers, the ministers of the Gospel become in the end, haughty, tyrannical, and intolerant, and their councils, assemblies, or conferences, degenerate into mere combinations, against the natural rights and liberties of those over whom they assume an authority."

How far these unfavourable symptoms may have begun to make their appearance among the ministers of our society, I will not pretend to say—but to them, many of the most judicious of our members, begin to look up, in hopes that the history of Methodism, on the other side of the Atlantic, may serve as a warning to the Methodists on this continent, and stimulate the

\* "Discipline," says a late writer, "is a very proper and significant term: but under this, various kinds and degrees of Spiritual tyranny may be couched; and it may serve to screen those who are secretly actuated by caprice, pride, or ambition. In every sect or party, some individuals are actuated by the spirit of *Diotrephes*; and as they are seeking pre-eminence, they cringe at first and use craftiness or guile in order to procure it. But when they get into power they are very apt to abuse it, or to grow insolent; and they have their little sycophants and dependants around them, who buoy them up, and contribute to support their Spiritual consequence and lordly deportment. Let us not in this, restrict our ideas to the Roman Pontiff, or to the priests in any national church; for a calm observer will perceive a like spirit to prevail among other teachers in every persuasion. It matters not by what appellation these persons are denominated; whether Bishops, Overseers, Superintendants, Ministers, Pastors, Leaders, Stewards, or Deacons: human nature is always the same; and if not restrained by grace, will appear by its fruits."

members, who shall compose the next GENERAL CONFERENCE, to amend what is wrong, and copy the plan of church government lately established there, on republican principles; which will much better accord with the views of Americans, and, perhaps, secure us against the numerous divisions and evils which have taken place in that country.

It is demonstrated, from the experience of all past ages, that corruption naturally generates around any man, or set of men, either in church or state, entrusted with unbounded power. Therefore, as an unfeigned friend to the cause of Methodism, in these United States, I would recommend a *restriction* of the present absolute power of our General and Annual Conferences, and the adoption of a LAY REPRESENTATION. A large majority of our members, and Lay preachers, will then have their present grievances amicably redressed, and the divisions, subdivisions and consequent evils, which this same cause produced among the European Methodists, may be timely prevented. For, from the general information we possess on this subject, we have great reason to fear, that the same cause will produce the same effects in this country, sooner or later, if not prevented by the beforementioned salutary and equitable *restriction* and *Lay representation*; while, by this just and judicious mode of procedure, we may happily prove the truth of that ancient proverb, "*An ounce of preventive, is better than a pound of cure.*"

A METHODIST.

Philadelphia, March 28, 1820.

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For The Reformer.

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*To the Editors.*—I have read three numbers of your Periodical work with pleasure, and I hope it will continue, as it hath thus far been, a vehicle of useful information—"open to all parties and biassed by none;" and that the whole counsel of truth, may go forth through this medium, in simplicity and godly sincerity; fearing no man, nor set of men, however dignified or exalted their stations in life may be; but standing firm for truth, "*neither seek to displease, nor dread to offend.*"

There is no sect or party, without their good properties and faults—though the faults of some are greater, and more numerous than those of others—and we ought to approve of what is good, and to disapprove of what is evil in all, and thereby show forth to a gainsaying world, that we see the good qualities and faults of each equally alike, and are wholly free from the prejudices of education, or sectarian ideas; which are like chains and fetters, holding too many all their lives, in a most wretched state of bondage to the traditions and views of men.

A candid and extensive view, moreover, should be taken of fallen christendom and the cause of truth, and every evil now existing among the professors of religion be boldly attacked, a remedy be prescribed, and the path to rectitude and holiness pointed out. For, in order that the seeds of virtue may be rightly cultivated and brought to maturity in the hearts of men, it is necessary to lay waste the Babylonish ramparts of bigotry, idolatry and papal infallibility, which are a composition of pride and ignorance, and occasion all the wars and disputations among jarring sectarians. And truly, the blind guides in christendom, have long been "striving to build up Zion with blood, and Jerusalem with iniquity." *The heads thereof have judged for reward, and the priests thereof have taught for hire, and the prophets thereof have divined for money: yet would they lean upon the Lord, and say, Is not the Lord among us? none evil shall come upon us.* Therefore, methinks, it is not only needful "to run to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem," as expressed in your motto, but to search its avenues and borders, as with "lighted candles," to find out all the abominations committed therein, in order to hold them up to public view, as in the mirror of truth, so that depraved christendom may behold the many glaring follies, empty pageantries, popular profanations, traditional and nominal professions, evident inconsistencies and enthusiastic ideas, together with the arrogant contempt, base ingratitude and inhuman conduct that abound among those who profess the benign principles of a living and energetic gospel; but, alas! possess not the divine influence thereof, nor wear the real badge of true discipleship, *humility and love.*

I am pleased to find, that the editors of *The Reformer* have begun at the head of popular delusion, i. e. the blind shepherds and leaders of sectarian flocks, who have ever taken the advantage of the credulity of their ignorant followers, and in the *arcana* of their temples, behind the consecrated desk, and in the altar and chief seats, have worked pretended wonders, prescribed imposed offerings, and administered the bread, wine, and water, as requisites to salvation; as also exacted the tithes and tribute money, and by a combination of selfish views, and worldly schemes in religion, have kindled up sectarian jealousy and intolerant party animosities; in the bitter spirit and furious zeal of which, there is no medium between moderation and madness—the cry from each of these desks and altars sounding long and loud, "The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord, are these;" leading tens of thousands thereby, while in the greatest delusion, to believe that they only are the infallible sect, the only one free from error, who worship God aright, and are under the protection of heaven.

I wish to patronize nothing but the truth, and therefore, I would humbly ask, How comes it to pass, that the houses appointed for prayer, are so often polluted with theological and scien-

tific jargon? and the commandments of men are taught for the truth of God? and none are permitted to minister before the Lord in their temples, who are not of their party, or authorized of men? by which means, many pious souls who have felt the influences of the spirit of Christ, exciting them to a public espousal of the cause of truth, have not had liberty to say on, as the spirit might give them utterance, for want of a license, witness of ordination, recommendation or approbation from a bishop, elders, or some pretended lords in the church, who presume to sit as censors, and limit the servants of God in their embassy, and not suffer them to *prophesy at Bethel, because it is the king's chapel*. Why do these things exist among all our professed christian sects, if they really possess evangelical love, and maintain gospel liberty, as the followers of Christ ought to do? I feel emboldened to assert, that every sect of professing christians, are more or less duped by their blind guides, who set as arbiters over the consciences of men, and flatter the vanity of one part of their flock, excite the jealousy of another, favour the opulence and avarice of a third, influence the resentment of a fourth, and pervert the understanding of all—still they profess to be the followers of Christ, and the friends of righteousness, and to maintain union of spirit and gospel fellowship.

Alas! I fear there is too much of the old leaven of the scribes and pharisees among us, even in this day of high profession and supposed illumination—too much formal worship and pharisaical compliance with human creeds and systems, for the sake of some pecuniary advantage, to be popular among their sect, or to have glory of men. Well might a pious man exclaim, "Alas! what huge masses of flummery, falsehood and false doctrines; what immense cargoes of wood, hay, and stubble: the lumber and trash of speculation and fanaticism are vended as evangelical truth, which the natural man cannot understand, while his mind is carnal and at enmity with God."

ADELPHUS.

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#### TO CORRESPONDENTS.

✍ A. B. Shall be inserted in our next number, and also an extract from a publication, printed at Poughkeepsie.

\* P. Two communications received from a correspondent are not so well suited to the nature of this work. When the subject which impresses his mind more accords with the object of the publication, we shall readily give it an insertion.

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